

JCS and NRO Declassification/Release
Instructions on File

Attachment "I"

TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR
NRO/JCS AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS CENTER

1. Problem:

To define organisational arrangements, functions, responsibilities, work flow and coordination procedures, such that the mutual responsibilities of the Director, National Reconnaissance Office, and the JCS for management and performance of aircraft flight over denied areas for reconnaissance purposes can best be satisfied, considering situations of both cold war and militarily more active situations.

In what follows, the term NRO implicitly recognises that the CIA functions and operations in support of the NRO are under the control of the Director, NRO, including the preparation and submission of plans for aircraft or other vehicle overflights, although such CIA functions are explicitly discussed in several places.

2. Terms of Reference:

a. The NRO/CIA OpCen and the JCS/JRC are currently performing denied area aircraft overflight operations.

b. NRO/CIA missions now, and increasingly in the future, will require commitment of resources and capabilities under JCS direction, specific or implicit.

c. The totality of missions under way or under active consideration (satellite overflight reconnaissance, peripheral aircraft, corridor or special mission aircraft, aircraft overflight, and overflight by special vehicles -- e.g., balloons, drones, etc.) and the level of hostilities or military action under way at any time (cold war, periods of tension with possible or explicit military action, or some form of actual war) require that precise arrangements be formulated to ensure that all planned or proposed missions are compatible, that necessary resources and

capabilities be made available, and that a focal point for coordination of the entire array of missions exists to ensure that all necessary missions are performed with the greatest possible dispatch.

d. The Special Group will continue to review and authorize all peacetime peripheral and overflight reconnaissance operations and other sensitive reconnaissance operations which fall within the scope of this charter. Should any missions be contemplated which are not normally so reviewed, it will be the responsibility of the parties in this charter arrangement to ensure non-interference of missions, lacking specific instructions to the contrary.

e. Reconnaissance mission planning will be in response to requirements validated by appropriate authority (such authority includes Secretary of Defense, USIB, JCS, and may include in special instances, by concurrence, Unified and Specified Commands, DIA and NSA) or in response to special request of appropriate authority.

f. Specific and detailed planning for reconnaissance mission support and operations, which also specifies mission control, will generally be conducted according to the following "normal partitioning."

JCS -- Peripheral flights, corridor flights, special missions, aircraft overflight missions anywhere in times of active military hostilities (as defined by the Secretary of Defense or higher authority) using inventory military resources, and/or other missions specifically requested or approved by the Secretary of Defense, or Special Group, whether or not requiring third party arrangements.

NRO -- All reconnaissance overflights over denied areas and other specifically designated areas, in particular overflights during relatively normal times or requiring highly sensitive third party arrangements. The Director, NRO will assign responsibility for preparation of aircraft overflight plans to the CIA when appropriate to the vehicle and mode of operation to be employed.

Contingency plans will be prepared by JCS and NRO as required by the authorities listed in paragraph e., above, and following normal partitioning unless otherwise instructed (see para g., below).

in accordance with policy agreed with the DCP

g. This "normal partitioning" can be perturbed by the Secretary of Defense or other higher authority to accommodate new or special situations. In particular, the Secretary of Defense or other higher authority may request either JCS or NRO to prepare plans for special situations or operations, and may request a transfer of mission control.

h. A joint operational entity is necessary to ensure complete and comprehensive planning and coordination. This is obtained through an expanded JRC which concurrently serves the operational needs of the NRO and JCS.

i. In accordance with the normal mission partitioning of f., responsibility for preparation of final mission execute orders and release will be assumed by the JCS for missions under their control, and by the Director, NRO for all operations under his control, including both CIA and DOD aircraft missions.

j. Under the terms of this arrangement the JRC functions and responsibilities will be enlarged, and appropriate additional officers brought in, to handle additional NRO duties as prescribed later, while maintaining current JRC functions and responsibilities.

In the performance of these several duties the JRC will be used as a directly integrated organisational entity by both JCS and NRO, reporting directly to these groups. Because of his several responsibilities under this arrangement, the Chairman, JRC, will be selected by the JCS with the concurrence of the Director, NRO.

3. Staffing and Location:

a. The Chairman of the JRC also will serve as Deputy for Operations, NRO Staff.

b. In his capacity as Deputy for Operations, NRO Staff, and in accordance with, and limited by, the instructions of the Director, NRO, the Chairman of the JRC will manage the NRO/Aircraft Operations Center (AOC), and supervise the NRO/Satellite Operations Center (SOC).

c. The NRO/AOC may be augmented by personnel presently assigned to the CIA Operations Office and other appropriate organizations within DOD, by joint agreement.

d. The NRO/AOC will be physically located within the Pentagon, to provide for maximum use of communications and other facilities, and to afford maximum ease of contact with JRC, situation rooms, etc.